

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) A system for combining narrowband and broadband transport mechanisms in a communications network, comprising:
 - a call control node including switching intelligence and narrowband switching fabric;
 - a plurality of connection control nodes each including broadband switching fabric;
 - and
 - an intermediate node operatively connectable to said call control node and said plurality of connection control nodes, said intermediate node including a plurality of call processors adapted to interwork between said call control node and said plurality of connection control nodes;
 - wherein said call control node further includes a load distribution function adapted to distribute the load amongst said plurality of call processors.
2. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein said plurality of connection control nodes comprise at least part of a broadband network.
3. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein said load distribution function is further adapted to assign one of said plurality of call processors to a call.
4. (Original) The system of claim 3, wherein said load distribution function is further adapted to assign said assigned call processor on a round-robin basis.
5. (Original) The system of claim 3, wherein said load distribution function is further adapted to assign said assigned call processor using load information related to the load on each of said plurality of call processors.

6. (Original) The system of claim 3, wherein said assigned call processor is adapted to encode a message sent from said call control node to a selected one of said connection control nodes for the call.
7. (Original) The system of claim 6, wherein said assigned call processor is further adapted to decode a message sent from said selected connection control node to said call control node.
8. (Original) The system of claim 6, wherein each of said plurality of connection control nodes has a transport link to a linked one of said plurality of call processors.
9. (Original) The system of claim 8, wherein said assigned call processor is further adapted to pass said encoded message to said linked call processor associated with said selected connection control node for transmission of said encoded message to said selected connection control node.
10. (Original) The system of claim 9, wherein said linked call processor associated with said selected connection control node is further adapted to receive a message from said selected connection control node to said call control node and decode said message.
11. (Original) The system of 10, wherein said linked call processor associated with said selected connection control node is further adapted to pass said decoded message to said assigned call processor for transmission of said decoded message to said call control node.
12. (Original) The system of claim 8, wherein said transport link is a signaling ATM adaptation layer transport link.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein said call control node is a legacy switch and said intermediate node is a mediation logic node, said legacy switch and said mediation logic node together forming a media gateway controller.

15. (Original) The system of claim 14, wherein said plurality of connection control nodes are media gateways within an ATM network.

16. (Original) In a communications system for using a plurality of call processors within an intermediate node for a call being handled by a call control node including switching intelligence and narrowband switching fabric and a selected one of a plurality of connection control nodes including broadband switching fabric, said plurality of call processors for interworking between said call control node and said selected connection control node, said call control node comprising:

a load distribution function for distributing the load amongst said plurality of call processors and assigning one of said plurality of call processors to the call.

17. (Original) The call control node of claim 16, wherein said load distribution function is further adapted to assign said assigned call processor on a round-robin basis.

18. (Original) The call control node of claim 16, wherein said load distribution function is further adapted to assign said assigned call processor using load information related to the load on each of said plurality of call processors.

19. (Original) The call control node of claim 16, wherein said call control node is a legacy switch and said intermediate node is a mediation logic node, said legacy switch and said mediation logic node together forming a media gateway controller.

20. (Original) A method for combining narrowband and broadband transport mechanisms in a communications network, comprising the steps of:

providing a call control node including switching intelligence and narrowband switching fabric, a plurality of connection control nodes, each including broadband switching fabric, and an intermediate node having a plurality of call processors for interworking between said call control node and said plurality of connection control nodes; and

distributing the load amongst said plurality of call processors.

21. (Original) The method of claim 20, wherein said step of distributing further comprises the step of:

assigning one of said plurality of call processors to a call.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein said step of assigning further comprises the step of:

assigning said assigned call processor on a round-robin basis.

23. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein said step of assigning further comprises the step of:

assigning said assigned call processor using load information related to the load on each of said plurality of call processors.

24. (Original) The method of claim 21, further comprising the step of:

encoding a message sent from said call control node to a selected one of said connection control nodes for the call at said assigned call processor.

25. (Original) The method of claim 24, further comprising the step of:

decoding a message sent from said selected connection control node to said call control node at said assigned call processor.

26. (Original) The method of claim 24, wherein each of said plurality of connection control nodes has a transport link to a linked one of said plurality of call processors, and further comprising the steps of:

passing said encoded message from said assigned call processor to said linked call processor associated with said selected connection control node; and

transmitting said encoded message from said linked call processor associated with said selected connection control node to said selected connection control node.

27. (Original) The method of claim 26, further comprising the steps of:

receiving a message from said selected connection control node to said call control node at said linked call processor associated with said selected connection control node; and

decoding said message at said linked call processor associated with said selected connection control node.

28. (Original) The method of 27, further comprising the steps of:

passing said decoded message from said linked call processor associated with said selected connection control node to said assigned call processor; and

transmitting said decoded message from said assigned call processor to said call control node.

29. (Original) A method for using a plurality of call processors within an intermediate node for a call being handled by a call control node including switching intelligence and narrowband switching fabric and a selected one of a plurality of connection control nodes including broadband switching fabric, said plurality of call processors for interworking between said call control node and said selected connection control node, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a load distribution function within said call control node for distributing the load amongst said plurality of call processors; and

assigning one of said plurality of call processors to the call using said load distribution function.

30. (Original) The method of claim 29, wherein said step of assigning further comprises the step of:

assigning said assigned call processor on a round-robin basis.

31. (Original) The method of claim 29, wherein said step of assigning further comprises the step of:

assigning said assigned call processor using load information related to the load on each of said plurality of call processors.

32. (Original) The method of claim 29, further comprising the step of:

encoding a message sent from said call control node to said selected connection control node at said assigned call processor.

33. (Original) The method of claim 32, further comprising the step of:

decoding a message sent from said selected connection control node to said call control node at said assigned call processor.

34. (Original) The method of claim 32, wherein each of said plurality of connection control nodes has a transport link to a linked one of said plurality of call processors, and further comprising the steps of:

passing said encoded message from said assigned call processor to said linked call processor associated with said selected connection control node; and

transmitting said encoded message from said linked call processor associated with said selected connection control node to said selected connection control node.

35. (Original) The method of claim 34, further comprising the steps of:

receiving a message from said selected connection control node to said call control node at said linked call processor associated with said selected connection control node; and

decoding said message at said linked call processor associated with said selected connection control node.

36. (Original) The method of 35, further comprising the steps of:

passing said decoded message from said linked call processor associated with said selected connection control node to said assigned call processor; and

transmitting said decoded message from said assigned call processor to said call control node.